

Popularity of Cyber Libraries among the Academic Community in Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized the concept of libraries. Each and every library is slowly getting digitized in the whole world. A concept of cyber library, electronic library, digital library or library without walls comprises of digital collections, services and infrastructure to support lifelong learning, research, scholarly communication as well as preservation and conservation of our recorded knowledge. These libraries reflect not only the changing nature of library referencing but also altering the attitudes of the people in the society. As an example; reading a paper, finding an article, a book, and author etc; from the cyber library is more trouble-free than in the various types of traditional physical libraries. (*Public, National, Special and Academic*). Today many users are dealing with online reference to overcome their academic desires such as compiling assignments, theses. So they inevitably become members of the cyber libraries and inevitably get addicted to it. This paper discusses accessibility, availability and popularity of cyber libraries among members of the academic community of universities in Sri Lanka.

The main objectives of this study are to identify popularity of cyber libraries and to enhance the quality and user friendliness of cyber libraries for academic community in Sri Lanka. Another objective of this study is to identify the limitations of cyber libraries.

The methodology followed in this study is deep exploration of cyber libraries and collecting data by sending questionnaires to 5% of the randomly selected academic staff members from 10 universities in Sri Lanka.

Primary data revealed that cyber libraries are popular than the physical libraries among the academic community today, owing to their advantages (*i.e. no physical boundary, round the clock availability, multiple access, easy information retrieval facility*), and also due to its hospitality and user friendliness. On the other hand, they used to cite between 20%-40% of digital information for their research and in the bibliographies. Suggestion is made to introduce more training and guidance for better searching and retrieving information from the cyber libraries.

Key words: Cyber libraries, user friendly, physical libraries, trouble-free, Sri Lanka